KAISER BILL'S MISTAKE

OR

THE PROSPECTORS DREAM

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The news went rattling round the world: The Kaiser's doom
was sealed,
An armistice will soon be signed, for the Central Powers
yield,
And with the news there sprang a spirit, 'twas fierce, wild
eyed with greed;
The gnawing hope of golden gain, for it's gold the nations
need.

Lo, what news from out the chaos of a badly muddled world?
What thrills it brought from northern trails, where magic
spells are hurled!
Where the goal in life's attraction is a call to pick and pan,
And the vital blood of action athrill in the pioneer man.

How the spirit generated—'twas contagious as the 'flu,"
And once in a while a man cashed in; but what is that to
you?
'Twas the ray of hope that lingered, yes, the burning spark
of light
Bound Old Bill and me together in unwritten pledge that
night.

Well, we both knew a little, and our nerves were all elate;
We had played the game together since the year of nineteen
eight—
Faced the frost fiend grim and bitter, then the muskeg and
the fly—
Now we're on the trail together, and we'll find the gold or
die.

Many a trail leads northward, to the brink of a boundless
land,
But only a few lead onward to where Hudson lost command.
Bill and I are enthusiasts, and we fear no man or beast,
So we break a trail through swamp and swale that leads us
to the east.

Our packs are growing heavy, and the scrub spruce seem to throng,
But the muskeg's getting stiffer, as the frost fiend creeps along;
In hazy snow that blinds our eyes, that's driven fast and straight,
We're battling fiercely onward to the northland's golden gate.

Every step is a pleasure, and every step is a pain,
But when we were in the south, how we longed for the north again.
Yes, Bill had said in Bermuda, "This damnable land I hate,
And in my dream I see a gleam—old Cobalt's silvery gate."

At times it seemed we would tire, but hope plucked up with the thought,
"Just over the hog-back yonder must be our golden spot."
On we crunch through frozen snow, athrill with our golden dream,
And once in a while a cat-faced owl wakes echoes with his scream.

We camp the nights in frozen moss, by a fire blazing high,
We hear the howl of hungry wolves, and the bull moose bellowed sigh.
The snow hangs up on the jungled fir, and gleams like magic mounds,
And Bill and I in the reindeer moss decipher out the sounds.

Again we start on the lonely trail to wend our way along—
"Say, Bill, is this the track of man, or has my head gone wrong?
Look, there is the mark of axe work, and a trench dug in the sand;
In heaven's name, are we dreaming things in this stark and frozen land?"

No, it's no dream, it's true enough—there is someone camping here.
Then Bill's brown eyes sparked with surprise, and he said, "It's mighty queer,
In the heart of desolation, 'mid a shroud of glimmering frost—
Oh, it may be they're survivors from some battleship that's lost.

"We've been bearing east for many days and must be near the coast,
This cabin here has just been built, and I wonder who's the host."
With wonder staring from our eyes, we knocked upon the door.
When we heard the inmates start to rise, we wondered more and more.

Then the door swung rudely open, and a voice said, "Vat you vant!
Ase you come to see if I vos steal der spruce tree from der svamp?
Dey shase me from oudt der Yourip, und I vant some blace to hide.
Vell, vhy you stand there und look und stare—vhy not you come inside?"

Astounded beyond the use of words, both Bill and I felt ill.
Whom do you think we found in the north but famous Kaiser Bill.
In the thickest haze of great amaze we stepped right in the door, and another shock awaited there—Von Hindie on the floor!

There were other four within the camp—I do not know their names;
They told us then that they came north in connection with some claims.
Molybdenite, they said it was, they had got some few years back—
A [illegible]e deal with politicians to balance up the pack.

Now Kaiser Bill looked slightly grieved, but was calm right to the core,
His face looked down in thoughtful frown, with eyes like an angry boar.
Then he raised his hand, his one good hand, and pointed to the east,
Saying, "Over dere in Ongland they vos calling me 'der beast.'"

He stepped up to the cabin door, with official Prussian stride,
Then blurted out with anger, "Has dot scoundrel, Vilson, died?
Yes, I vill told to you dot story, Von Hindenburg und me,
Of von scoundrel vots called Vilson—he dinks he own der sea.

"At first der var go very vell; den I bust up some big boat,
Und Voodrow Vilson get mad like hell, und send dis ugly note:
'Now, Kaiser Bill, you stop dot vork, or I'll come mit Unkle Sam,
Und make you not to fight like shark, but der vay of Christian man.'

"Dere is anodder von called Borden, vhat struts about mit grace;
He vos a pardner mit two George, vot own dot island place.
He send some big Canadians vot just fight like vild-cat men,
Und ven dey come at der Chermans, vell, I dink ve're beaten den.

"I vos try for sleep von night pefore I leaf dot place, Berlin,
Ven Gott he beat upon mein door, den shout, 'May I come in?'
He say, 'Mien frien, mien frien der Kaiser, you fear you loose dat fight,
Den vhy you not buildt some great big gun und bust dings up just right?'

"Dot Gott is yet mien pardtner—vell, I dink I try some more,
Den I get in von big submarine und sail to Labrador,
Und here I gets der molybdenite, to hard der hard steel yet,
To buildt some gun, such mighty gun dat der vorld get reare, you bet.

"Und now mien friendt der prospect man, vill you have some Cherman beer?
I told you now dot Foch in Yourip, I vish I had him here—"
But here his mind went wandering, and he mumbled something low;
I think it was this prayer he said, though I'm not quite sure I know:

"O Gott vot is mein pardtner, I toldt you good und vell,
Dot ven I's dead und finished I vant to go to hell,
Und if yo' 'll send dot Foch und Haig, I'll meet dem at [illegible]ate,
Und see dot dey're looked after vell on der very hottest grate."

The Kaiser's beer went mighty well, but it started me to kick
And partner Bill is a quiet guy who wants no foolish trick;
So he slugged me in the shortest ribs, which brought me wide awake,
And it seems that I'd been dreaming about Kaiser Bill's mistake.